



REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

His Excellency Mr. Tijjani Muhammad-Bande
President of the 74th session of the General Assembly
United Nations
New York

Tallinn, 23 September 2019

Mister President,

Allow me to convey my best wishes for your tenure as the President of the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly.

As you know, Estonia voted against the resolution on “Format and Organizational Aspects of the International Migration Review Forums” (A/RES/73/326).

Allow me to explain Estonia’s position vis-à-vis resolutions on “Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration” (A/RES/73/195) and A/RES/73/326.

In recent history, during the years of occupation and illegal annexation by the Soviet Union, Estonia has been subject to forced immigration that is making issue of migration particularly sensitive. Border security, and whom to allow, and on what terms, to enter into state’s territory are regarded as one of the most important factors of state sovereignty and national security.

All states ought to enjoy their sovereign right to shape and decide their national migration policy and legislation in conformity with international law. Estonia retains its sovereign right to decide the applicable effective domestic and international legal framework on migration issues.

Universal fundamental rights and freedoms apply to all persons, including migrants. Nevertheless, it does not mean that there exists a human right to migrate in international law.

Let me stress that for Estonia, the Global Compact on Migration is internationally non-binding, and does not create any legal obligations for Estonia and is not international customary law.

Estonia does not consider the Global Compact on Migration as evidence of state practice nor *opinio juris* for the emergence of customary international law and wishes to be regarded as a persistent objector. Should the Compact be a basis for creation or adoption of a binding provision then Estonia will not be bound under international law to any such provision.

Please accept, Excellency, my assurances of highest consideration.

Urmas Reinsalu
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Republic of Estonia